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CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS: HAS THE BALANCE BEEN LOST?

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ABSTRACT

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Recently, United States civil-military relations have been viewed as in a state of crisis. The Bush Administration has helped to foster this claim by loosely accusing the U.S. military of inappropriate behavior and insubordination to civilian control. Deliberate efforts have been introduced by the Secretary of Defense to reign in the military. Critical evidence continues to surface regarding the "gap" that has developed between the military and civil sectors of the United States. Some scholars studying this issue have sounded an alarm over the perceived increase in American military independence. In effect, they have warned that this shift in the American civil-military relations has tipped a time-honored balance. These warnings have lumped together vastly different elements of civil-military relations from recent military operations and confuse the debate. Additionally, they distort and ignore the historical record concerning the American civil-military tradition, contain uncritically accepted assumptions of the proper norms that should be applied to military behavior, and focus attention primarily on anecdotal evidence rather than carefully considered data. The result radically misrepresents the true nature of American civil-military relations. While the alarmists do highlight evidence of problems demanding attention, these issues are more symptomatic of the traditional ebb and flow of American civil-military relations. Careful scholarship rather than anecdotal evidence refutes allegations of a civil-military crisis and places alarmists' charges into both historical and theoretical perspective. The American civil-military tradition was forged during the struggle for independence during the Revolutionary War. Our first President, General George Washington, provided the American model for respectful, but fully engaged military interchange with civilian governmental leaders. On close examination, today's alleged civil-military crisis reflects the natural dynamic state of strain between the civilian and military sectors, and the inevitable tension inherent in the citizen-soldier duality of all American military service members.

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> We as a nation have not really come to grips with what should be the proper role of uniformed officers in debates about issues that affect the armed services. It is especially problematic in an era of deference to expertise of all sorts in many areas. At a time when fewer and fewer members of government and the electorate have any military experience, how should military officers bring their expertise to public discussions of national security issues? If military officers are made to sit on the sidelines, how can the debate be truly an informed one? And how can we, in our great democracy, ask American men and women to go out and die if we haven't held an informed debate? In this key sense, the quality of the political debate boosts our military efficiency, our promise to the troops that they will be used wisely and well.
>
> —Thomas E. Ricks, A Soldier's Duty

Through most of American history, the American military has a long tradition of unquestioned acceptance of the supremacy of civilian control over the military. The Founding Fathers of our nation struggled, in 1776, with how best to define the separation and shared responsibilities between civil authorities and the military. Military professionals are taught from an early age to respect civilian leadership decisions as final. This obedience has been called into question in recent times as the lines between national policy and military roles and missions have blurred. At the strategic level, military leaders serve to advise and help construct policy that enables and supports our National Security Strategy. Under these circumstances, it is inevitable that conflicts within the civil-military relationship will result. The military must be a player in the national security decision making process. The role they play and their interaction with political leadership must be balanced and clearly defined in order to guide current and future military leaders.

In recent years, civil-military relations in the United States have been viewed as in a state of crisis. The current Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, has challenged what he views as evidence of inappropriate military behavior and insubordination to civilian control that developed during the Clinton Administration. Deliberate efforts have been introduced by Secretary Rumsfeld to reign in the military.[1] Debate swirls surrounding evidence of a shift in balance or "gap" that has developed between the military and civil sectors of the United States. Some scholars studying this issue have sounded an alarm over the perceived increase in American military independence. In effect, they warn this shift in American civil-military relations has tipped the time-honored balance established over 200 years ago.[2]

This paper explores the makeup of the civil-military balance, historical perspectives on the balance, potential cause and effect in a shift in the balance and potential solutions to help minimize and maintain the required balance.

THE CIVIL-MILITARY BALANCE

> "While I understand the concerns, I do not believe the people who wear the uniform of the United States are disconnected from the rest of American society or are in danger of becoming isolated. While differences between service in the military and life in the civilian world will always exist, the military must remain connected with the American people"
>
> —GEN Henry H. Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1998

> "…because if you've never served, you become either hostile or obsequious to the military."
>
> —Charles Moskos, Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University, 1998

The term "balance" in the context of this paper does not seek to describe an equal application of weight or measure to a scale or object. Rather, it is intended to provide a clear explanation of applicable duties and responsibilities between civil and military leaders in the accomplishment of various tasks. In another context, it also highlights the important differences separating the military from the larger society.[3] With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States military has undergone dramatic changes in relation to roles and missions. Peacekeeping and stability and support operations have replaced contingency missions against the Soviet block. As the military conducted a series of peace support operations during the 1990's, claims of an increasing rift between the military and civilian leadership in the country amplified. In 1994, Richard Kohn wrote a National Interest article "Out of Control: The Crisis in Civil-Military Relations" that sparked extensive debate on the issue of balance between civilian leadership and their military subordinates.[4] Viewed against that backdrop, recent U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, have redrawn the once clear cut ideological and political lines of the Cold War and further challenged the issue of civil-military relations. This balance was put to the test with each military deployment as discussions between the civil and military leadership on topics ranging from force structure to exit strategy were deliberated. Kohn's arguments helped trigger a series of articles and studies that took a critical look at the changing political and cultural landscape between the United States' civilian and military leadership. Like Kohn, several of these authors have claimed that the military had become independent of civilian

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control and were in jeopardy of impairing the established civil-military relationship and possibly damaging overall military effectiveness. [5]

The Triangle Institute for Security Studies sought to examine this issue systematically when it conducted a study in 1999, on the shift in balance or "gap" between the military and American society (TISS Study). The objective of this comprehensive study was to analyze the dynamic of balance between American society and the military. It was also designed to determine whether this gap had grown or narrowed, and highlight any future implications for military effectiveness and civil-military cooperation.[6] The study analyzed data collected from over 4800 influential civilian and military respondents as well as the general public. Utilizing systematic methods of survey research, cultural and political analysis, and historical inquiry, the study sought to tailor a set of questions regarding the nature and importance of the balance between military and civilian traditions, including:

- Are military attitudes, opinions, and perspectives diverging from those in civilian society, and if so, why?
- Is this difference of opinion, if it exists, growing, and if so, why?
- Does the shift in balance affect U.S national, foreign and military policy development and execution? Could a shift in balance lead to civilian ignorance of, or insensitivity to, military culture and ultimately to policies, directives, or undertakings that undermine the military? What does the future hold in store for future civil-military relationships?[7]

Results from the TISS study identified two areas of concern or "gaps." The first concern, termed a political gap, examined trends where the military disproportionately identifies with strong conservative values and the Republican Party when compared to the rest of the country. The second gap was related to military experience, as fewer and fewer members of our civilian society have either served or have a close connection with military members.

The idea that military professionals will maintain a distance from political entanglements and the civilian culture dates back to the founding fathers. Only recently have researchers identified a strong political bias. Samuel Huntington commented on the military's conservative tendency in the 1950s.[8] Recent surveys support the premise that military "elite", i.e., officers at various points in their careers, identify with conservative values and are more attracted to the Republican Party than when compared to their civilian "elite" counterparts[9] While this trend is not as pronounced in the enlisted population, career soldiers do show a bias towards Republicans.[10] An additional concern that complicates this issue is the identification of the Democratic Party as "anti-military."[11] This conservative identification spills over to foreign and domestic issues, such as gun control, UN membership, abortion, NAFTA, and the death

penalty. Active-duty military views tend to align with those of the Republican Party while non-veteran civilians align with the Democratic Party.[12]

In comparison with the amount of attention the political gap garners, the experience gap is the weaker cousin. However, the reality is this "gap" is even more pronounced. The percentage of American citizens who have military experience or any connection with the military continues to decline. Coupled with a decreasing number of elected officials who have military experience, this "gap" continues to grow. Since 1971, the number of veterans in the House of Representatives has dropped from over 75 percent to around 25 percent. The Senate has experienced a similar, although smaller decline in military experience. [13] As more veterans from World War II and Korea retire, this trend is likely to increase. Despite these figures, Congress still has a significant percentage of veterans when compared to the general population of the United States. This is vital to civil-military relations in regards to oversight and management of military operations by Congress. Congressional duties mandate a certain level of understanding and experience with military issues.[14]

The TISS study offered that when the civil-military balance is lost and the military develops a culture that is distinctly unique from the society at large, military readiness will be influenced. The baseline requirements to recruit quality members into the force could suffer as a result of this shift in balance. Taken to an extreme, this culture could lead to a questioning of civilian decisions, possibly leading to outright disobedience. While the likelihood of a military coup is dismissed by the authors of the TISS study, it is a possible that military leaders may disobey or disregard directives or weaken enforcement of those policies in question. The public opposition to President Clinton's homosexual policy by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell brought this issue center stage.[15] While there were a host of reasons behind the timing and questioning of this civilian decision, one explanation is that military leaders were not prepared to live within the letter and spirit of the policy. This conclusion is supported by the TISS survey, where nearly one fifth of the military population surveyed stated they would expect the military to attempt to avoid compliance with orders they disagreed with "some" of the time"; with five percent increasing that assessment to "most" or "all" of the time.[16]

While the TISS study did provide evidence of areas that required improvement, these challenges can also be attributed to the traditional give and take of military and civilian relations. Critics who believe the military shifted the balance away from civilian leadership share an incorrect assumption that the traditional role of unquestioned obedience of civilian control does not allow the military to debate in the decision making process. They also do not accept that over time, there has been a blurring of the lines within various governmental processes. A

closer examination reveals that the critics fail to clarify what they mean by a shift in balance or specific examples of a collective move in the wrong direction. Regardless of their perception of the current balance in U.S. civil-military relations, there is little concrete evidence to suggest that a military coup has ever been anything more than a topic for fiction books. While a loss of balance could create problems short of a military coup, military critics have yet to produce evidence that a crisis is around the corner, waiting for the final straw to break civil-military relations into a thousand pieces. The TISS study and others like it fail to examine the issue in its entirety. Rather than simply looking at this topic in the near term, it is important to understand how the idea of a balance in civil-military relations took hold in the United States. While the seed was planted during the period of early American colonization, it blossomed during the Revolutionary War with England.

THE FOUNDATIONS OF CIVIL-MILITARY BALANCE

> "It's a fundamental principal that armed services can truly serve a democracy only if they are a reflection of that society and are impacted by the same social trends."
>
> —John McCain, U.S. Senator, 1998

> "…[military service] changes one's way of thinking and gives one a sense of patriotism, a sense of working for something bigger than one's self."
>
> —LTG Brent Scowcroft, 2001

Developed from the desire to distance the new republic from objectionable British rule, early civil-military relations during the American Revolution began with the development of the Continental Army. The origins of our army were first outlined during the Constitutional convention and associated deliberation regarding the duties, responsibilities and missions of the Continental military forces. While most American historical scholars believe the American Army transformed into a professional organization during the Civil War, the long road to victory during the War for Independence from Britain served as the basis for the development of the first truly American Army.[17] Distinguished Revolutionary War historian Don Higginbotham offers that the formative influences on George Washington created the clearest early views on the origins of American civil-military relations. Baptized under fire during the French and Indian War, Washington grew annoyed with the snail-paced decision making process, inept politicians, and inadequate logistic support. On several occasions he made "indefensible behind the back barbs at both executive and legislative branches [of the Virginia Colony]," maneuvered one politician

against the other, and offered calculated excuses for unauthorized actions effected in the name of military expediency.[18] Washington utilized his experiences and skills developed from significant tenure in the Virginia legislature to gain a broad understanding of the powers of political privilege and a deep appreciation for the need to maintain popular and political support an army. These lessons would serve him well in the looming conflict with England.

WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE AND GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON

Appointed as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental Army in the summer of 1775, Washington arrived in Boston with a message for the leadership of this newly created Army. They must pay strict "attention to the civil constitution of this colony" and he swore he would give due "regard to *every* Provincial institution … [as] a principle of duty and policy."[19] It can be argued that civil-military relations were stretched to their greatest limits during the Revolutionary War. General Washington fought desperately to maintain not only the confidence and support of the Continental Army, but the respect of the Continental Congress as well. With an unshakable sense of purpose and deliberate personal sacrifice, Washington was able to hold the two ends together throughout the war.[20] Shouldered with extensive logistical challenges, elusive pay, immature and sometimes pompous militias, and an unreliable population of colonists, these dynamics had the effect of isolating General Washington and the Continental Army from the civilian population. These soldiers believed that their extraordinary sacrifice was being neglected while others among them, including some in Congress, were reaping huge benefits from the war. The sacrifices of Washington and his military forces, coupled with political infighting in Congress and among the colonies, are among the finest in our national history. Viewed in this context, the strategic, operational and tactical responsibilities that faced General Washington were massive:

> To sustain an army; to drum up new recruits every spring while enticing the much-abused militia to hold the lines in the interim months; to procure sufficient provisions, uniforms, tents, guns, and ammunition. All these tasks entailed endless appeals to civilian leaders not only in Congress but at the state and local level as well. … Washington faced the additional challenge of wiring together his heterogeneous throng, making it fight and occasionally win – all without unduly antagonizing civilian and public officials.[21]

In many respects, Washington was the man caught in the middle. He fought both ends of the issue in an effort to keep them tied together. Without his voice, the military view would not have been represented in the Congress. On the converse of the equation, he served as the man held responsible by Congress for implementing strategic policy, plans, and programs developed to prosecute the war. Clearly in a unique position between the Army and the

Congress, Washington was forced to serve as the central link in the chain of communication with his civilian superiors in Congress. Cognizant of this responsibility, Washington did not shrink from advocating policy views or "exchange opinions on subjects that legitimately concerned the armed forces."[22] Drawing on his experiences as a young officer during the French and Indian War, Washington applied his considerable store of knowledge, experience, and relationships, to set the conditions for success between the Continental Army and Congress. There was much more to General Washington's adept use of civil-military relationships than simply following orders. In the most poignant cases, if not the majority, he balanced his outspoken advocacy for the Continental Army and Commander in Chief with his responsibilities as a subordinate to the Continental Congress and their civilian authority. General George Washington's actions serve as an excellent case study in how to deal with real instances of political-military conflict and the often inflated personalities, egos and agendas associated with all things political. His efforts are a positive set of instructions for serious observation and analysis and set the stage for civil-military relations in this nation.

Healthy civil-military relations require a balance between divergent points of view. It is through dialogue and debate of ideas that the full range of potential policies can be evaluated to realize desired political goals, while preserving military functional capabilities - all without harming society's values.[23] General George Washington established the foundation for future American civil-military relations as he applied a sense of mutual respect and deference with his allies and adversaries to achieve success. Our current system stems from the guiding hand and appropriate sense of balance developed by General George Washington.

CIVIL WAR - PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND HIS GENERALS

The Civil War provides the next noteworthy example of the delicate balance between civilian leadership and military officers. In the early stages of the war, President Abraham Lincoln and Major General George B. McClellan clashed over Union operations in Virginia. Both viewed the Confederate capital in Richmond as a center of gravity, but they sharply differed on the ways and means towards capture. Lincoln and McClellan engaged in a lengthy debate during face to face meetings, personal messages and operational cables regarding strategy utilized by the Army of the Potomac to achieve strategic objectives in the East. Lincoln viewed the application of overwhelming force against the South as an essential element required to win the war.[24] This vast gap was never resolved to Lincoln's satisfaction and led to McClellan's eventual dismissal in November 1862. Despite their acrimonious private messages and public debate, no tangible evidence is offered that suggests Major General McClellan ever sought to take matters into his own hands and subvert the President's civilian control over the

Army.[25] Abraham Lincoln also understood the political implications this decision might have on his future as the President. During his tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac, McClellan managed to develop a significant political constituency for himself. After his dismissal by Lincoln, he put this political power to the test in an unsuccessful bid against President Lincoln in 1864.

President Lincoln experienced similar frustration with other Union generals, such as Don Carlos Buell and William Rosecrans. As the war in the East failed to produce the desired results, President Lincoln elevated various generals to command in the East. But like McClellan, Generals John Pope, Ambrose Burnside, and Joseph Hooker also proved inadequate to the task.

After the victory at Gettysburg, when General George G. Meade failed to pursue General Lee and the badly-mauled Army of Northern Virginia, Lincoln again clashed with his commander. By year's end, General Meade was replaced by General Ulysses S. Grant. Exhibiting characteristics not seen in previous commanders, Grant's aim was not to maneuver General Lee into checkmate; it was to destroy his army. General Grant clearly understood President Lincoln's intent for the prosecution of the war. Armed with the commander's intent and a clearer appreciation of his position relative to the commander-in-chief than his predecessors, General Grant set off to achieve victory.[26] Less than a year after his opening battle with General Lee at the Wilderness in May of 1864, General Grant accepted Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

A significant lesson learned from the Civil War in the context of balanced civil-military relations was the intensely political nature of this war. As commander-in-chief, Lincoln, who had at best negligible military experience, having served as a militia officer in the short-lived Black Hawk War, had to rapidly develop his own strategic leader competencies, while at the same time conducting the nation's business. Strategic decisions, such as judging military talent, selecting military leaders and executing campaign strategy were routinely tainted with party politics and political intrigue. The desire to quell numerous war related political firestorms in Washington often caused President Lincoln to intervene in the operational and tactical conduct of the war. Many a Union officer commented on the hazy differences between grand strategy, operational tactics and Presidential politics.[27]

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND THE CIVIL-MILITARY BALANCE

> "So one of the challenges for me is to somehow prevent a chasm
> from developing between the military and the civilian worlds,
> where the civilian world doesn't fully grasp the mission of the
> military, and the military doesn't understand why the memories of
> our citizens and civilian policy makers are so short, or why the
> criticism is so quick and so unrelenting."
>
> —William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, 1997

> "Our challenge, at a time when fewer people have served or have
> a connection with the military, is to build a strong base of support
> and appreciation for what soldiers do, and to challenge young
> people, especially, to think about their obligation to serve…"
>
> —Louis Caldera, Secretary of the Army, 1998

When one considers the natural differences between the military and civilian society, it comes as no surprise that each has developed in a distinctly different manner. There is a long standing distrust of the military element of power. As early as 1787, Alexander Hamilton expressed concern in The Federalist Papers over a standing army and the civilian measures necessary to control that force.[28] Americans everywhere believe in the concept of individual freedoms as outlined in the Bill of Rights. However, over the years military critics have expected soldiers to subordinate those basic freedoms to the essential military principles required to train, fight, and win the nation's wars.

Until World War II, the public desire was to maintain a small standing army and effect expansive mobilization in a time of crisis. Once the need for the large mobilized army had passed, those called to service would be returned to the private sector. After World War II, with the onset of the Cold War, the country transitioned from a "mobilization force" to a "force in being".[29]

In Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State* and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier*, the effects of a "force in being" were investigated. The often divergent cultural differences between the civil and military societies were debated as a potential cause for a "gap" or shift in balance between public citizens and the military. Huntington expressed concern that the military's power and influence on national security policy, coupled with the requirements of military security was at odds with the ideologies of American liberalism and the need for civilian control.[30] Janowitz advocates the military was out of step with the political realities of national security policy and the use of the military instrument of power.[31] He also offers that the military must engage in a cultural change to become military managers as well as

battlefield commanders. In effect, he contends the balance should shift towards a military more like the civil sector, rather than a distinctly separate military culture.[32]

The average American citizen believes that within the context of civil-military relations, the military and its civilian leadership have two crucial responsibilities – protect the nation from threats against the security of the nation through the application of military force, while acting as the standard bearer for American principles, values, and way of life. That said, the public expects these military responsibilities to be achieved without significant impact on the established way of life.[33]

As an instrument of national power, the military has three missions in support of the nation. It serves as an advisor to government authorities regarding the "implications of alternative courses of action" from the military perspective, executes military operations and policy as directed, and acts as an expert for the government in relation to issues of military security. Regardless of any trepidation the military may have regarding these missions, they are expected to execute them "even if it is a decision which runs violently counter to [its] military judgment."[34] S. E. Finer further refines this model by insisting the military must respect the principle of civil supremacy as the key for appropriate civil-military relations in any society.[35] Kenneth Kemp and Charles Hudlin expand on this by identifying responsibilities from which the military is generally excluded – doing routine police work, running courts, and making policy. They focus on the "the principle of civil control over the military" as a subsidiary but crucial principle to Finer's civil supremacy, where "civilians make policy, and the military implements it." However, they assert that the military has decision authority in "the means" of policy implementation, and since there is a sort of ends-mean dialectic in which one organization's ends is another's means, they acknowledge that the military has its own sphere of appropriate control.[36] Huntington is also in agreement regarding the principle of civilian control over the military. Regardless of the real or perceived differences between the military and civilian factions, he contends that while the military has great influence, power, and authority relative to national security policy, it must always be flavored with national values and subordinate to civilian control.[37] Understanding and acknowledging that the military has an appropriate, albeit restricted, sphere of control is crucial to examining the perception of a shift in the civil-military balance. From another view, how does the military define the military realm or sphere of influence when conflicts or tension arise within the political-military realm?

During the conflict in Vietnam, this question of balance was again put to the test. As the end of the decade drew to a close, popular support for the war and the military was lost. This shift in civil-military balance took the form of massive anti-war protests and considerable

numbers of young men fleeing to Canada, Great Britain, and Sweden or otherwise avoiding the draft. Significant national reflection and debate ensued as the country wrestled with the prosecution of this unpopular war. The nation had grown weary of the bloodshed and failure to achieve the stated objectives. The trust and confidence in the President, Congress and military diminished in direct correlation to increases in the protest movement. This conflict also served to expand the rift between politicians and military professionals. Much has been written regarding the decaying relationship between these crucial decision makers and the prosecution of the war in Vietnam. Civilian leaders in Washington often clashed with senior military leaders over tactical and operational employment issues. The military's concerns centered on their perception of heavy-handed policy directives that hampered war efforts in Vietnam. The relationship grew increasingly more contentious as the War progressed. The military believed that their political masters had failed them in several critical areas and as a result, their efforts to achieve victory in Vietnam were hampered. In an effort to highlight the growing chasm between the military and their civilian leadership, the Joint Chiefs of Staff even considered mass resignation over the issue of civilian meddling in the military war effort.[38] A second order consequence was the loss of popular support for the military on the home front. As the conflict in Vietnam drew to a close in the mid-70's, the general perception of the military community was that the nation had turned against the armed forces.

After Vietnam, the United States military transitioned to an all volunteer force (AVF). In many ways the AVF could be considered a throwback to the early Continental Army days. The tradition of a small standing army comprised of volunteers stood in stark contrast to a large conscript force. During this transition, concerns were voiced regarding the impact of this decision in relation to the balance between the public and military sectors. Arguments regarding changes in the demographic makeup of the military (increases in minorities and women) were offered as evidence of a potential shift in balance.[39] Was the AVF a social experiment or the best vehicle for the missions it might encounter in the future?

These questions were advanced by the belief that the military would grow isolated from the public without the draft. Some suggested that without a national draft, the military was fast becoming a uniformed version of the civil sector.[40] Military readiness and mission effectiveness would suffer and there was significant potential for ineffective and dangerous use of the military instrument of power as civilian leaders lost touch and understanding of the post draft military.[41] The post-Cold War period has fueled the debate regarding rifts in the civil-military relationship. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the public has cried out for a "peace-dividend" and significant reductions in the Cold War military structure. Opponents contend that this potential

further reduces military opportunities for the public and serves to drive a greater wedge between the military professional and American public. This wedge might have a negative impact on the civil-military balance. Opponents to this view would offer this wedge is reflective of the natural give and take between the civilian and military sectors and the inevitable tension inherent in the citizen-soldier duality of all American military service members.

The potential for shifts in the delicate balance between the American public and civil-military relations become even more fragile when issues related to national security are added into the mix. As discussed previously, questions of national security and civil-military relations have sometimes taken center stage in our nation's history. The military balance of historical obedience to civilian leadership often competes with the demands of the modern strategic environment. The National Security Strategy helps to resolve these demands.

NATIONAL-SECURITY POLICY AND CIVIL-MILITARY BALANCE

> "When it comes time to make the decision to send our young men and women into harm's way, the decision should be made by a leader who knows that such decisions have profound consequences."

—John McCain, United States Senator, 1999

> "If the need for American military power is seen as less compelling, if the pentagon is seen as wasteful, and, at the same time, our military leadership is perceived as distant and different from much of American society, will the military be sustained in its need for resources? In its frequently controversial operations? In its recruitment? Our third great risk of failure is that the United States may become less than fully committed to its military."

—Richard Danzig, Secretary of the Navy, 1999

The balance between the military and its civilian leadership becomes most perilous along the path that leads to the creation and implementation of the National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS stems from dialogue and debate regarding national purpose and objectives (ENDS), accomplished in concert with strategic concepts (WAYS), and applied by national instruments of power (MEANS). This collective appreciation and agreement on the nation's ends, ways and means that form our national purpose are potential issues of contention between civilian and military leaders. The very nature of military service and the demands it places on each military service member create a climate and ethos that differs from their civilian masters. When one considers the nature of military service compared to the civilian society, it is not surprising that the two have developed some differing distinctions in regards to values, morals and cultural beliefs.

The Korean conflict highlighted the challenges and distinctions associated with the balancing act civil-military leaders undertake in the national-security policy development and execution. Bitter and often open debate on the operational concepts of the military campaign in Korea led President Harry S. Truman, in 1951, to relieve General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. President Truman's strategic objectives (ENDS) coupled with his political priorities on the national and world stage clashed with several proposals regarding the use of military force (MEANS) championed by MacArthur. Despite MacArthur's heroic status within the military and his clear difference of opinion with the Commander in Chief, no "military crisis" materialized from his dismissal. There was a brief, but intense, domestic political crisis for President Truman that he endured without serious effect on his Presidential effectiveness. While many military officers did not support the manner in which MacArthur was removed, not one questioned the President's authority to do so. In fact, the Joint Chiefs of Staff were unanimous in their support of President Truman's dismissal of General MacArthur. Many officers on either side of the argument believed that unquestioned allegiance to civilian objectives often skewed the balance between military obedience and participation in the debate regarding policy-making. Differing distinctions in regards to values, morals and cultural beliefs between Truman and MacArthur in relation to National Security Strategy, were center stage for the entire world to see in 1951. Despite this incident, the delicate balance between the civil-military relations was never in jeopardy.

Goldwater-Nichols legislation of 1986 served to increase military involvement in national security policy development and decision-making. The roles and responsibilities of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and the service chiefs, as well as the regional combatant commanders, were expanded in an effort to directly tie them to the development of national security policy. A second order effect of these new responsibilities has been an increase in military self-perception as "at least as competent and capable as its civilian overseers in contributing to the policy-making process."[42] As such, it is not hard to draw the conclusion that the military's power and influence relative to national security decision making has increased since Goldwater-Nichols. In particular, the roles and influence of the CJCS, Combatant Commanders and the Joint Staff have increased because of Goldwater-Nichols. Not surprisingly, real and perceived disagreement among civilian defense leaders and military officers over defense issues has also increased during this same period. On September 10, 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld remarked, "the adversary's closer to home. It's the Pentagon bureaucracy."[43]

After Vietnam, the U.S. military embarked on a significant period of self-critique. Much of the fallout from this effort singled out senior military leaders for errors concerning the lack of vigorous debate by the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the deficient defense policies and tactical micromanagement of operations in Vietnam, by President Johnson and Secretary of Defense McNamara.[44] Growing from these lessons learned was an argument to apply crushing military force only when narrowly defined vital U.S. interests or policy goals were at risk. The hope was that military debacles like Vietnam would not be repeated. Labeled the Weinberger-Powell doctrine, this philosophy was formulated by the military generation from Vietnam. Essentially, this doctrine says a country should avoid intervening in international conflicts unless there is a vital interest and a clear, achievable goal. With the demise of the U.S.S.R., it was hoped that economic free markets and international prosperity would signal a shift in the face and nature of national strategic policy. This optimism was only partially correct. The single focus threat of the Soviet Union was gone, but in its place, the nation has had to revisit the entire scope of national security policies, programs and strategy. Rather than focus on a singular threat, "America has redefined security to include illegal drugs, illegal immigrants, terrorists, rogue states, international natural disasters, humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping, and homeland defense."[45]

Introduced by President George H. W. Bush, the Weinberger-Powell doctrine gained prominence during the Clinton administration. General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, tried valiantly to utilize this doctrine as a "litmus test" for the use of military force. During the Clinton administration, Powell was openly critical of U.S. policy in Bosnia and Somalia for not having a clear and consistent purpose or full military commitment. Even before President Clinton took office in 1993, General Powell outlined his national security concerns in a 1992 article:

> "As soon as they tell me [military intervention or humanitarian aid] is limited, it means they do not care whether you achieve a result or not. As soon as they tell me 'surgical,' I head for the bunker."[46]

Bosnia was the foreign policy issue which candidate Clinton had criticized President George Bush the most on. Clinton had promised more aggressive action in that tormented place. As President, he seized the opportunity, and developed strategy and policy to address this foreign policy issue. General Powell successfully argued for clear and achievable goals relative to national security in Bosnia.

Critics contend Powell had over-stepped his boundary as Chairman. His duty was to provide sound military advice to the Commander in Chief on matters of national security not

public advocacy of how and when the military element of power should be applied. Despite this criticism, General Powell managed to block significant United States intervention in the Balkans until after his departure in September 1993. The consequence of Powell's actions led several critics to point to these events as evidence of eroding civilian control over the military.[47]

Despite his best efforts, military contingency operations increased noticeably after Powell's departure. Coupled with significant cut backs in manpower and other programs (soldier welfare, modernization, training programs, etc.), military readiness declined. The result was an imbalance in the force structure when compared to the increased mission requirements. The term "defense train wreck" was utilized to describe the disconnect between increasing mission loads and simultaneous force structure reductions.[48] While the predicted "train wreck" never materialized, efforts by Powell and others who followed led to the concern that "the world leadership position of the United States has so expanded the scope of military affairs that there is no longer a clear-cut cleavage between military and civilians spheres of activity."[49]

Despite these instances and the conflict they generated, the military has not challenged its obedience to civilian leadership. However, they continue to interact in the formulation and policy debate regarding the national security decision making process. This entire process has been accomplished without clear definition of roles and ethical standards of conduct.

The fear of standing armies is often cited as the driving force behind the American principle of military subordination to civilian control and the desire to separate them from policy debate and decisions. While this fear was certainly a major consideration for the Founders, the subordination principle owes far more to the example of Washington and the constitutional codification of the President as Commander in Chief. The historical record of the Constitutional Convention reveals no public debate over the principle of military subordination to civilian control – a standard assumed by the Founders.

Discussions of the military focused almost exclusively on two brief debates over the wisdom of authorizing or restricting standing armies, as well as discussions over which governmental body would have the authority to command the military.[50] The overriding concern of the Founders with respect to military influence on the decision making process was not with military obedience, subordination, or coups, but with the aggregation of any kind of excessive power – to include military capability – in the hands of a particular person or governmental body.[51]

CONCLUSION

> "What we want to do is reconnect America to its military."
>
> —William S. Cohen, Secretary of Defense, 1999

> "On the contrary, a continuing gap between military leaders and
> civilian officials could well result in situations where civilian
> officials fail to press and to challenge the military leadership on
> serious issues…We should be concerned if the gap between
> military and civilian communities widens to the point that civilian
> leaders believe only the military can make competent decisions
> about military issues. This state of affairs could come to pass if
> civilian authorities do not care about or understand military
> doctrines. It can emerge from programming and budgeting
> processes that yield to military officials the decision-making
> power. It is more likely to happen when the military profession is
> highly respected, yet when public interest in military affairs
> slackens, and when the sons and daughters who make up the
> military ranks come from a narrower segment of the population. If
> you think this sounds a bit like a description of the United States
> today, you're correct."
>
> —Admiral Bill Owens, Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2000

Can the military balance historical obedience to civilian leadership within the demands of
the modern strategic environment? I believe it can. Where does the military plug into the
process? In the current Bush administration, military leaders serve in all areas of the national-
security design, development and execution. Despite reductions in the number of personnel
that occupy positions outside of DOD, significant policy advice and expertise resides in the
military community. Strategic demands have blurred the historically distinct lines of
responsibility between military and political leaders. Yet, there is no clearly defined linkage or
agreed guidelines that guide the behavior and conduct of the military in this developmental
process.[52]

History has shown that no one particular option or technique has been universally
accepted as the military's role in the national-security decision making process. As
administrations change and strategic situations warrant, the military balance has adjusted
accordingly. These have been personality based (GEN MacArthur-Korea) or situation driven
(GEN Powell - Bosnia). The decision-making process, in the context of civil-military relations,
has withstood past tests and does work.

16

Increasing the military's role in the national-security decision-making process has proven to be a credible option. Military officers often present dissenting, non-partisan views as national policy is debated and formulated. However, the national character and ideology of the country has often been at odds with increased military participation. "Guns or butter" discussions erupt with every increase in the defense budget. Recent policies regarding application of military force in Kosvo, Bosnia and Afghanistan highlight public concerns over the "military hawks" having too much influence. Partisan politicians, entrenched bureaucrats and the defense lobby often cite the need for a stronger military voice. However, the American public has a historical apprehension with the military exerting too much influence over national policy. The public tension created by a shift towards militarism would be profound and quite possibly damage public support of the military.

Purposeful reduction in the military's national security influence would have disastrous consequences. The military must maintain the linkage with government and society in order to ensure the security of the nation. Congressional legislation (Goldwater-Nichols Act) has served to enhance, not reduce, the influence of the Combatant Commanders and CJCS in the decision making process. But, expanding the military's role in this process has placed it at odds with civilian leadership (Powell-Bosnia) and redefined the original boundaries envisioned by the Founding Fathers.

The current roles and responsibilities between the civilian leaders of this nation and their military subordinates has matured and been tested over the course of the nation's history. Periodic examination of the strategic landscape and the military's responsibilities within this landscape helps to balance the civil-military architecture. This balance will enable civil-military leaders at the national level to chart the most efficient course that continues to secure liberty for the state and its citizens.[53]

National values articulated through the National Security Strategy demand that the military have the capability to defend the nation. During the Clinton Administration, civilian and military leadership sought new ways to deal with the post cold war strategic framework. The military stretched the boundaries between civil-military leadership in ways that would have been unthinkable years ago. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld has challenged this expansion in an effort to reign in the military leadership. He clearly articulated a position that places the military subordinate to his office. He believes the military role in the national-security decision making process flows through him as Secretary of Defense.[54]

It is not unusual or reckless for the balance between civil-military components to sometimes shift one way or another. Disagreement over policy conclusions and national

strategy decisions is normal in the routine performance of responsibilities. This issue is nothing new in the context of United States history. George Washington and the Founding Fathers of this nation purposely created this give and take relationship. They were determined to strive for a balance that stressed:

> The unequal dialogue rests on the willingness of senior officers to court dismissal by obdurately making their case to their civilian superiors. The lessons of serious conflict are, above all, that political leaders must immerse themselves in the conduct of war … that they must master their military briefs ... that they must demand and expect from their military subordinates a candor [sic] as bruising as it is necessary … that both groups must expect a running conversation in which, although civilian opinion will not dictate, it must dominate.[55]

Where is the balance? The question does not have a black or white answer. Past answers and present questions are covered in gray. The techniques and professionalism of the individuals involved often decide the real answer. The essential question posed by the average United States citizen is how best to ensure that sufficient military capability is available to deter and respond to security threats while sustaining the cherished fundamental liberties embodied in the Constitution. Through a deliberate and sometimes contentious effort, this balance between the American public and the military has evolved and matured since the founding of the nation. The exchange, debate and continuous dialogue between society and the military help to shape national security policy in this nation. The essential military roles remain the same as they were at the birth of the Continental Army: the defense and protection of the nation.

I believe the solution is to seek a balance between the traditional subordinate relationship and the desire to inform and advise civilian leadership on the perils of military employment. Accepted standards of conduct and guidelines that allow the military to openly participate in the decision-making process are vital. Failing to find this balance will have serious consequences on future relations between civilian and military leaders.

Word Count: 7682

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